

MAYOR'S REPORT TO COUNCIL
JANUARY 10, 2019

AARP TAX PREPARATION:

AARP volunteers will not be in Willoughby Hills this year to assist our residents with income tax preparation due to the decreased number of volunteers this year. I am pleased to report, however, that they will be on hand at area senior centers and libraries to help our residents. I have posted the locations on the City website and am preparing sheets that you will find at City Hall and the Community Center in order to make your appointments. They will be available from February 4 to April 12, 2019.

CONDOLENCES:

On behalf of the City of Willoughby Hills, I wish to express condolences to SGT Shannon Vachet on the loss of his beloved K-9, Razor, who passed away. Razor did a great job for the City of Willoughby Hills and he will certainly be missed.

WELCOME:

Welcome to our newest Recreation Commission member, Vicki Miller. We are pleased that you have joined this fine commission. Thanks to residents Kristina Zeleznik and Jeff Fruscella who have left the Commission after serving their terms. We appreciate the help they provided for City Recreation.

YMCA DREAM HOUSE UPDATE:

On Tuesday I was joined by a majority of Council members to welcome the YMCA Dream House into Willoughby Hills. It will be located at the corner of Maple Grove and Maple Hill and should be completed by June 2019. At that time, we should expect many visitors to our City until the August 2019 drawing. I spoke with the YMCA representatives at the Ground Breaking Ceremony and, after our conversation, decided to establish what I am going to call our "Dream Team." This team of individuals, made up of any interested parties or business representative, will begin to meet in February to discuss a plan to promote our City and businesses during the Dream House Campaign. Whether it is putting together a handout with business coupons or list fun things to do in Willoughby Hills after their tour of the Dream House, I want to begin to put together a plan to make it a nice experience for the visitors, and our residents as well, who will come to tour the home. If you are interested in being a part of our "Dream Team", please contact Gloria Majeski in my office by

January 31 to get your name on the list. We will then arrange to have all interested parties meet initially in February to brainstorm and move forward with this endeavor.

GIANT EAGLE CLOSING

Giant Eagle at the Shoppes of Willoughby Hills announced this week that they will be closing effective February 1, 2019. This was not communicated with me, as Mayor, prior to the decision due to Corporate's need to keep the information confidential due to Union and other concerns. I learned this after speaking with the Manager at Giant Eagle earlier this week, who apologized for not being able to share this with me more timely.

I have also spoken with Scott Scheel, the owner of the Shoppes of Willoughby Hills, who anticipates being able to fill the space and will share the information as soon as he is able to do so.

Moving forward, the Planning Commission is working to approve the application submitted by Aldi's Supermarket for the space formerly occupied by Sears Hardware and Indian Motorcycle that will provide a place to grocery shop for our residents. Unfortunately, the bank and pharmacy within the Giant Eagle have also closed and is not something that Aldi's will pick up, but hopefully we can fill that void in the future.

To that end, in order to attempt to alleviate future businesses moving out of Willoughby Hills, I find it necessary to have more of a pulse on what is happening in our business community by getting to know our businesses and helping them promote themselves to bring people to shop and dine here. When our Economic Development Director Steve Roszczyk was here, we knew every business and owner and Councilman Dave Reichelt had even established a "Business of the Month" Club where we recognized and promoted our businesses. I feel the time has come once again to "go to bat" for our businesses, which will be a win/win for all of us as it will improve home values and provide more of a safe environment feeling for those who have turned away due to safety concerns. I am, therefore, establishing a Mayor's "Business Advocacy Team" or BAT group of any one who who be interested in serving on this type of task force for the betterment of our community. Similar to the "Dream Team" I mentioned earlier, I would like to have interested parties contact my office by January 31st and we will then set up a date in February to move my plan forward. So, if you are interested in becoming a BATman or BATwoman (ha ha!), call my office and we will be going to work together to avoid future closures such as the Giant Eagle store this week.

UNION WORKERS REINSTATED UPDATE:

On December 20, 2018, the State Employment Relations Board (SERB) held a final hearing in the case of the AFSCME Union, consisting of our Administrative

Staff and the job eliminations that occurred on May 1, 2018. Following the hearing, SERB issued an Order to the City of Willoughby Hills, mandating that all thirteen employees be reinstated with full back pay and benefits. I complied with the State Order and ten of the thirteen employees returned to their positions this past Monday. Finance Director Brichacek has the task of computing the necessary financial figures to comply with the pay mandates, but I am pleased to have our staff back and recognize the value they have to me and, more importantly, to our residents. I would like to also recognize, however, those employees who helped to sustain the services during the absence of these employees, including Mark Grubiss, Chris Collins, Debbie Semik, Tim Serazin, Stefanie Nero, Frank Brichacek, Dawn Snyder, Tina Kucera, Judy Kincaid, George Eaton, the Police Department, Fire Department and Service Department. Thank you for your commitment during this difficult time.

LEGISLATION:

I support the passage of all legislation this evening, including the appointment of James O'Leary as our Law Director, the grant agreement for Produce Packaging, the purchase of two Police vehicles, the execution of the Settlement Agreement, and the rescinding of ordinances regarding my spending authority and the City newsletter.

EXECUTIVE SESSION REQUEST:

Finally, I would request an Executive Session following "for the Good of the Community" that should not exceed 30 minutes, but excusing City Engineer Difrancio, but inviting all of Council and Finance Director Brichacek, to discuss a personnel matter. Thank you.